

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MARTIN 00032 251930Z

ACTION EB-08

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 EUR-12 ISO-00 CAB-02 CIAE-00 COME-00

DODE-00 DOTE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 CIEP-01 FAA-00 L-03

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FM AMCONSUL MARTINIQUE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2513

INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS

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E.O.11652: N/A

TAGS: EAIR, FW

SUBJECT: CIVAIR: DESIGNATION OF AMERICAN AIRLINES, INC., TO
OPERATE SCHEDULED SERVICES IN CARIBBEAN

REF: STATE 001134, PARIS 02160

1. CAB'S DECEMBER 8 DECISION TO PERMIT AMERICAN AND EASTERN AIRLINES TO PROVIDE NON-STOP SERVICE BETWEEN NEW YORK/NEWARK AND MARTINIQUE/GUADELOUPE HAS BEEN GREETED WARMLY BY OFFICIAL AND UN-OFFICIAL CIRCLES HERE. IT IS RECOGNIZED HERE THAT THE MOVE WILL PERMIT THE FWI TO ATTRACT MORE TOURISTS FROM THE AMERICAN MIDWEST BY USING AA AND ITS FEEDER AIRLINES, AND A GOOD MANY OF OUR CONTACTS BELIEVE THAT CAB'S DECISION MAY REPRESENT A TURNING POINT IN DEVELOPING A REALLY MODERN AND LARGE TOURIST INDUSTRY. WE HAVE ALREADY BEEN CONTACTED BY AA REPRESENTATIVES WHO ARE NOW IN THE PROCESS OF ORGANIZING THEIR OPERATION IN FORT-DE-FRANCE AND POINTE-A-PITRE, AND THEY SAY THEY HAVE BEEN GREETED WITH OPEN ARMS IN BOTH COMMUNITIES.

2. WE BELIEVE THE CAB'S DECISION WAS A WISE ONE AND LIKELY TO PROMOTE OUR INTERESTS IN THIS PART OF THE CARIBBEAN. WE HAVE
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PAGE 02 MARTIN 00032 251930Z

EXPLAINED IN OTHER CABLES ON THIS SUBJECT THAT WE HOPE THE ENTRY OF ANOTHER U. S. AIR CARRIER WILL PROMOTE A VIGOROUS TOURIST

INDUSTRY HERE. WHAT CONTINUES TO CONCERN US IS THE LACK OF ANY OTHER REALLY VIGOROUS PLANS OR PROJECTS, EITHER FROM THE PRIVATE BUSINESS SECTOR, OR FROM THE GOF, WHICH WOULD LIKELY PROMOTE THE ECONOMIC PROSPECTS OF THE FWI UPON WHICH, IN OUR

OPINION, SOCIAL AND POLITICAL STABILITY WILL DEPEND IN THE YEARS AHEAD.

3. ON BALANCE, HOWEVER WE ARE NOT SANGUINE THAT AA AND EA WILL FIND FWI A GREAT TOURIST FIELD TO DEVELOP. WHILE WE ARE HOPEFUL THAT THEIR NEW OPERATIONS WILL CONTRIBUTE, AND MORE THAN marginally, TO THE FWI'S STAGNANT ECONOMY, WE REMAIN CONCERNED WITH THE GENERAL LACK OF INNOVATION AND IMAGINATION IN MARTINIQUE'S AND GUADELOUPE'S TOURIST INDUSTRIES. ALL TOO OFTEN IT IS THE SAME OLD STORY HERE: INADEQUATE EFFORT IS MADE TO STOP THE SKY-ROCKETING HOTEL ROOM COSTS; BUDGETS FOR ADVERTISING IN THE U.S. MARKET REMAIN FAR TOO SMALL; GROUP TOUR PACKAGES ARE LIMITED OR UNAVAILABLE; AND THERE IS AN OFTEN PUZZLING LACK OF UNDERSTANDING ABOUT THE POTENTIAL IMPORTANCE OF TOURISM TO THE ISLANDS, REFLECTED IN WILDCAT STRIKES AND WALKOUTS BY HOTEL PERSONNEL, ETC. ALL OF THIS IS REFLECTED IN THE FACT THAT IN THE PAST FEW YEARS THREE OF MARTINIQUE'S BETTER HOTELS HAVE GONE OUT OF BUSINESS, WITH NO SIGN, SO FAR, OF NEW RISK CAPITAL TO RE-OPEN THEIR DOORS. BUT DESPITE THESE OBVIOUS PROBLEMS, AMERICAN'S AND EASTERN'S NEW FLIGHT RIGHTS ARE A HOPEFUL SIGN THAT TOURISM IN THE FWI WILL BEGIN TO MAKE A GREATER ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTION THAN HERETOFORE.

SHACKLETON

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